



Labor and Public Employees Committee

HB 5356 An Act Concerning Pandemic Pay for Essential Workers

May 8, 2022

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Kushner, Chairwoman Porter, ranking members, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Colleen Carter and I work at the for the Department of Administrative Services as a Data Support Specialist. I am a member of AFSCME Council 4, Local 704.

I am a Data Support Specialist for DAS and I have worked for the state for thirty-four years. My job requires me to make sure that the computer operations for all state agencies are functioning. During the pandemic, thousands of state employees were teleworking suddenly. This meant our department was 24/7. We needed to be at our jobs so the communities the state was serving weren't impacted. I am an essential employee for DAS.

I am here today to express my support for HB 5356, An Act Concerning Pandemic Pay for Essential Workers. This bill will offer all essential employees a onetime payment of either \$2000 for full-time workers or \$1000 for part-time workers. It is so important to recognize the workers who had to be present at their jobs during the pandemic, each day, no matter what, and this bill would financially support us in more ways than one.

The pandemic brought on new struggles for myself and for my brother. My brother has developmental disabilities. He needs significant care on a daily basis, so that he can be successful each day. In March 2020, the HARC program, where my brother attended, had closed and it did not reopen until September that same year. My brother not only needed care for his daily functioning, but he also struggled with diabetes. He needed his medicine and monitoring, and this meant that he needed a caretaker. I had to find someone to take care of my brother so that I could go to work. I needed to have a paycheck. At first, I had to be home for a few days to take care of him, utilizing my time away from work. I had to pay for the care for my brother, and this literally almost left me broke. It wasn't until September that HARC reopened.

I am passionate about this bill and its purpose. I ask that you vote in favor of it, so that it may help those like myself who are frontline workers who continue to work their hardest each and every day. Thank you for supporting this valuable piece of legislation.